



Media Information

CLOSE CHAMPIONSHIP BATTLES GIVE THE SA RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIP A NEW SLANT FOR ROUND FOUR AND FIVE AT NAMPO PARK

With two events and four rounds of the SA Rally Raid Championship still to be run, positions in the Production Vehicle category have taken on an interesting look.

The Toyota Gazoo Racing DKR Hilux FIA T1+ squad occupy the top four slots in the Overall Production Vehicle category, with Dakar stalwart Giniel de Villiers and Dennis Murphy a slender 15 points clear of second placed Guy Botterill and Simon Vacy-Lyle - 61 points, in their first season of the competitive SA Rally-Raid Championship. Behind them team-mates Henk Lategan/Brett Cummings and Shameer Variawa/Danie Stassen are separated by a single point. Variawa/Stassen were one point ahead of current leaders De Villiers/Murphy going into the #TeamHilux Rally-Raid Bronkhorstspuit, but a tough time in loop one on Friday saw the pair starting from the back of the grid on Saturday.

#TeamHilux Rally-Raid associates, Eben Basson/Leander Pienaar Class FIA T1 Hilux, and bothers Johan and Werner Horn DKR Hilux FIA T1+, who missed the opening round of the championship, are fifth and sixth with 45 and 42 points respectively, while Gareth Woolridge/Boyd Dreyer (NWM Ford Castrol FIA T1+ Ranger) are within striking distance on a tally of 40.

The top ten in the SA Rally-Raid Championship Overall Production Vehicle standings are rounded out by Brain Baragwanath/Leonard Cremer (Century Racing CR6) 27 points, Daniel Schröder/Ryan Bland (WCT Engineering prepared FIA T1 Nissan Navara) 24 points and Gary Bertholdt (FIA T1 Renergen Toyota Hilux) 21 points. Rodney Burke who accompanied Lance Trethewey in the King Price Xtreme CR 6 at the TGRSA in June, is 10th in the navigators' standings with 20 points.

In the Class championships matters look a little different, courtesy of the five points earned for starting an event.

Toyota Gazoo Racing also dominate the top four position in Class FIA T1+ with De Villiers/Murphy, who won the TGRSA marathon event in Upington on 95 points, followed by Botterill/Vacy Lyle after three solid performance so far this season only 13 points adrift. Variawa/Stassen who started their season off with an exemplary second place at the Mpumalanga 400 in March are third on 79 points with Lategan/Cummings who won the opening round in March and the #TeamHilux Rally-Raid Bronkhorstspuit, close on their heels with 75 points.

Gareth Woolridge and Boyd Dreyer have shown excellent pace this season in their all new NWM Castrol EcoBoost-powered Ford Ranger, but had their chances scuppered by mechanical maladies, after comfortably defending third place until 10km from the end of the popular Bronkhorstspuit event, are fifth with 69 point.

The Horn siblings from Malalane, in only their second outing in the DKR Hilux FIA T1+, on a score of 55 occupy sixth place while Lance Woolridge and Elvéne Vonk have been plagued by mechanical problems, and are yet to open their scoreboard.

In the FIA T1 class there is also not too much room for error. The #TeamHilux Rally-Raid pair of Eben Basson, in his second season of the SA Rally-Raid Championship, and experienced Leander Pienaar top the

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leader board with 102 points, 24 points clear of their closest rivals, German driver Daniel Schröder and Ryan Bland in their Nissan Navara.

The ever consistent Philip Botha and Roelof Janse van Vuren in the Red-Lined VK56 are seven points adrift and a force to be reckoned with. Gary Bertholdt who was excluded from the results for a safety infringement is fourth, while new comer Johan de Bruyn (Red-Lined VK56) partnered by the versatile and experienced Gerhardt Schutte is fifth, Schutte is fourth in the navigators' standings.

The FIA T1.2 class for 4x2 vehicles introduced at the TGRSA 1000 Desert Race in Upington and primarily populated by CR 6 machines is balanced on a knife edge with two multiple champions, Brian Baragwanath and Lance Trethewey level-pegging on 65 points. Leonard Cremer, Baragwanath's initial navigator heads the scoreboard in the navigators' standing with a tally of 73 followed by Rodney Burke who did duty for Trethewey at Bronkhorstspuit.

Jerome Galpin (Century Racing CR 6) adorns the third step of the podium with 46 points.

Following a superb win on the #TeamHilux Rally-Raid Bronkhorstspuit Ernest Roberts/Henry Köhne (JCP Steel Supplies CR 6) with 40 points to their credit are respectively fourth and third in the drivers' and navigators' standings. The French couple, Yannick and Valerie Panagiotis (Century Racing CR6) round out the top five in the FIA T1.2 standings.

In Class T, young Jaden Els and experienced navigator Armand du Toit (King Price Xtreme Renault Duster) are at the top of the leader board 10 points ahead of Vryburg businessmen Christo Rose/Arno Olivier with father and son, Johan and Sean van Staden on the third step of the podium.

Championship standings will undoubtedly be top of mind when teams head for round four and five of the SA Rally-Raid Championship at NAMPO PARK on the weekend of 30 September and 1 October.